

## Youth's stake in the CGIAR Dryland System CRP 1.1

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*CRP 1.1 Dryland systems – Integrated Agricultural production systems for improved food security and livelihoods in dry areas – Launching , 21-23 May 2013, Amman, Jordan, (ICARDA)*

1

### YPARD presentation on “How to involve the Youth in CRP1.1 for achieving impact”

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#### Intro

This presentation is only a **preliminary study** on how we can work on strengthening youth empowerment within the CRP as we have not been involved in the topic for a long time. However, we have a number of hints on how this can be done, based on the Youth components of the CRP's proposal, and we have a community of active young members that we can mobilize to work on different aspects of the programme, at different levels. We would focus particularly on youth targeted research, capacity building opportunities and youth involvement in policy discussions.

**YPARD** is indeed an international community of young professionals in agriculture at its largest scope, FOR young professionals for agricultural development. We call YPs, people up to 40 years old. We have a network of regional offices and around 30 country representatives in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, for now. We currently have more than 5000 members.

Why YPARD? In two words: because young professionals need to get more involved into agriculture development, have a key role to play, and a number of assets for it, although it is not always well recognized. YPARD's objectives are to exchange information and connecting people, create opportunities for policy debates, promote agriculture among young people and provide more access to resources and capacity building.

The **CRP 's proposal** recognises the disenfranchisement of the youth in the dry areas. The youth and Young small scale farmers particularly lack **political power and decision making, access to finance (financial resources and tools) and markets and supportive institutions and policies**, and suffer **social inequity**.

Policies and institutions and technology's access must work towards youth empowerment. There is no sustainability without social equity as supported by W.Payne but also it is evident that there is no work towards the future of agriculture without involving those who will be adults and leading forces in the coming years. This is particularly true talking about research which also should essentially impact best practices for sustainable livelihoods.

Youth are object to rural – urban **migration** and urbanization, and to disproportionately high **unemployment** and inadequate livelihood skills. The DS program recognizes that, being marginalized, causes a number of broader social and civic issues such as crime and violence.

That is why the program aims at working towards **retaining youth in rural areas** and towards them to **contribute actively to the well-being of their community**, particularly **economically**, through **technical and financial capacity building**.

2

The CRP is aiming at improving youth's "**ability to learn and make decisions based on adequately contextualized knowledge**" and particularly strengthening their leadership skills to overcome the complexity of dryland systems<sup>1</sup>.

## Action

**Targeted research on youth and capacity building**, particularly on **rural youth**, are planned, towards this youth empowerment. We also see a number of opportunities through the planned program to get youth involved on **policy level** and bring to the forefront youth specific issues to decision makers. **Mentorship** can also be an approach that could be implemented with the program to respond to Capacity building's objectives, and ensure a better youth-senior collaborative action towards sustainable actions.

A particular focus would be given to **young women**, who represent a significant part of the youth and who are even more vulnerable. It is an important cause for YPARD who is very much involved in the GAP initiative – Gender in Agriculture Partnership in order to stress YOUNG women's particular challenges and role.

These opportunities would be **context-specific, and collective** actions will be valorised (particularly on regional level).<sup>2</sup>

**RESEARCH-** It is meant to Conduct **research** on exploring and appreciating activities, needs of the youth, measure the impact of the actions, drawing policy recommendations that can address youth empowerment, sharing lessons and experiences with other partners for them to give more place to the youth in their programmes and organizations

- As proposed for women, the initiative could seek for **opportunities** for increased food security and improved livelihood that are specifically suited for young people through better understanding of **youth roles and need** regarding farming along the food value chain.
- In another hand, the CRP is planning M&E studies on disaggregated **innovation impact on vulnerable groups** which among others should target youth

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<sup>1</sup> The factors include: climate, soil, markets, capital and tradition. Socio-economic and institutional factors will be brought particular attention that influence stakeholders choices in agriculture. The risk of unsustainable is stressed by the proposal as major.

<sup>2</sup> The CRP wants to work with NARS on skills related to cooperating in teams, emphasizing science quality, relevance, applicability of what is being learned, result and impact oriented approaches and making the learning process enjoyable, in coordination with the CGIAR's Capacity strengthening, learning and Knowledge sharing unit

- CRP1.1 , following the plan for gender, could apply **best practices in research on youth** empowerment. This should present **age disaggregated data** (and maybe also data related to youth migration and unemployment) that the CRP doesn't have yet. This may potentially lead – most probably not in the nearest future but later - to a CRP-wide strategy as it is planned for gender?
- YPARD could work as a youth specialist to lead youth-related studies within the CRP1.1 the same way a specialist is planned for gender-related studies . In addition we could partner on these different researches.

#### **CAPACITY BUILDING –**

- The youth support will also be addressed through a capacity building approach “analogous to that of **the U.S. land grant university system**, and will include **training youth in farming skills** on technologies and for **employment or business** development.”
- We support the idea that strengthening youth capacity would **enable them to articulate their views and participate effectively in the R&D** process as expressed in the proposal. The CRP indeed asserts the need of well-trained researchers and extension agents capable of leading change”.
- We support the attempt to represent the youth in training programs, field experiments, extension activities, impact assessment and others for boosting their knowledge and skills.
- We could work on local level through our YPARD Country representatives and local reps to **assess local capacity needs** for effective action. These reps may work among regional and country level teams of the CRP to make sure that the youth issues are addressed.

**MENTORING** - In order for this project to be sustainable, it would be most favourable to get young professionals involved, for example, through mentoring or assistance ship.

- The programme – within SRT1 welcomes senior scientists to engage policy-makers and development partners to discuss critical decisions for appropriate programme's outcomes based on scientific evidence and practice. The young professional would provide support to the senior scientist, contribute to stress evidences and make sure youth issues are addressed.
- This mentoring approach applied to policy matters could serve as mentoring pilot project and be replicated for other matters covered by the programme (technical level and institutional).
- NARS staff studying for MSc or PhD degrees will be offered joint supervision of their thesis research by CRP1.1 scientists and universities. This can also be put under a mentoring/coaching approach

**POLICY - Policy recommendations** will be developed to ensure that a supportive institutional environment is provided for empowerment strategies to become effective. Although this didn't seem mentioned as a key direction for youth empowerment, we believe that it could be a key aspect of Strategic Research Team 1 that a “youth national/regional champion” and probably community youth champions as well, makes sure that policy recommendations do address youth specific issues among others.

These different ways to work for youth empowerment can be discussed and applied through and in correspondence to each SRT.

## SRT and Youth

With reference to the proposal, Youth empowerment would take place mainly through the SRT 1 and SRT 3. However Youth involvement is necessary in all the SRT in order for the youth to contribute to the core goal of the CRP.

4

The **SRT 1** aims at building an innovative platform to create boundary work among a variety of stakeholders, with particular focus on local community and policy making. Therefore it could be a mechanism to facilitate youth's involvement as a key stakeholder group and be the **voice of the youth on policy discussions**.

Through the SRT2, it is important that youth participants and others address **youths' specific vulnerabilities** and risks – related to finance, land, capacity building opportunities etc.

The **SRT 3** on Sustainable intensification for more productive, profitable, and diversified dryland agriculture with well-established linkages to markets gives a particular attention to youth farmers and youth enterprises with a view of stemming the exodus from rural communities. There is indeed here, through capacity building a way to fight against unemployment, notably by soliciting innovation and entrepreneurship from the youth. Youth can bring new fresh ideas, create and innovate for better productivity, and thus get more interested in the sector.

Youth can strongly contribute to **SRT4** by contributing to enhance cross-regional **information sharing** via ICT4D. New technologies and networking is a key asset for the new generation born in a “social” era.

## Conclusion

In brief, we see three ways to involve the youth to take part in the program: through targeted youth research, capacity building and youth policy inclusions. We must emphasize the need of:

- **Age disaggregated data**
- **Mentoring** through senior/junior partnerships
- Assessing the **capacity needs** of YPs **locally**
- Involving YPARD/**youth** representatives in country **strategic teams to make sure their needs are addressed at all levels**.
- Engaging **youth as an explicit stakeholder** with YPs from the different groups of partners involved in the programme (government, researchers etc)

YPARD is very willing to work in partnership towards full youth integration into the program and solicit our dynamic network of young professionals to get involved.